(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Foreign Trade Policy was announced in August, 2004 with the objective of doubling our percentage share of global merchandise trade within the next 5 years and to act as an effective instrument of economic growth by giving a thrust to employment generation. In 2003-04, India's exports stood at a little over US$ 63 billion. In 2007-08, they have exceeded US$ 155 billion. During the four years period, India's exports have grown around 2 $^{1/2}$ time, at a cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) of 23%, year on year, way ahead of the average growth rate of international trade. Further as per estimates, the incremental exports over the past four years have created around 135 lakh new jobs.

(c) and (d) The Government keeps monitoring the emerging situation and takes suitable measures, as necessary, from time to time.

Priority to supply of iron ore to domestic steel producers

3878. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request from the Indian Chamber of Commerce has been received in his Ministry directing the public sector mining companies to prioritise supply of iron ore to domestic steel producers at reasonable rate;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is thinking of putting a benchmark on ore prices in the long-term interest of the steel sector;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) is there any proposal to ban the export of iron ore without value addition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, has suggested that Government must issue directive to all Public Sector Mining Companies that they must accord priority of supply of iron ore (sized ore and fines) for domestic industry under long-term contracts wherein pricing can be linked to the cost of mining plus a reasonable ROI. Such prices may be subject to cost escalation annually.

(c) and (d) There is no such proposal under consideration at present.

(e) No, Sir.

Special package for tea plantation sector in Kerala

3879. SHRI THENNALA G. BALAKRISHNA PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total special package amount for the development of tea plantation Sector in Kerala announced;

(b) the total fund utilized so far under this scheme;

(c) the total number of tea plantation workers benefited so far under this package;

(d) whether Government has fixed any time limit for implementation of this package;

(e) whether Government is facing any type of hurdles in implementation of the special package so far; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) In order to address the issue of old age of tea bushes and to increase the productivity of plantations, the Union Govt. announced a Special Purpose Tea Fund (SPTF) scheme in January, 2007. In so far as Kerala is concerned, total area targeted for development over a period of 15 years is 36933 hectare. Out of this it is proposed to uproot and replant 3700 hectare and rejuvenate 8600 hectare during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period. Total investment to be made for this purpose during the Eleventh plan period would work out to Rs. 183 crores of which the net outgo from the SPTF by way of loan and subsidy would be Rs. 137 crores comprising Rs. 91 crores as loan and 46 crores as subsidy.

(b) During the 1st year i.e. 2007-08, a sum of Rs. 1.89 crore has been sanctioned by way of loan for developing 109.68 hectare. A sum of Rs. 1.12 crore has also been sanctioned towards subsidy for develoing 130.48 hectare. A sum of Rs. 45 lakhs has already been disbursed as first instalment of subsidy. Loan disbursement is scheduled to commence from last week of April 2008.

(c) It is not possible to qualify such numbers since the development work in a tea estate is undertaken on area basis. However for replanting one hectare in Kerala 1944 mandays are required.

(d) The time frame for the Special Purpose Tea Fund is 15 years commencing from 2007.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

Review of incentives for difficult terrain States

3880. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had introduced an industrial policy in 2003 providing incentives to entrepreneurs for setting up industries in the North-Eastern States and in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, etc. located in difficult terrains;

(b) if so, salient features of the incentives;

(c) whether any review of the impact of the said policy has been carried out in the last five-years;

(d) if so, the findings thereof;

(e) whether Government has recently withdrawn those incentives;